

The following comments pertain to issues in ISRP 98-1 "*Review of the Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Program for Fiscal Year 1999...*" and its Appendix A "*ISRP Comments on Proposals*".

16. Issue -- Data Management and Analysis

The Independent Scientific Review Panel (ISRP) identified issues related to data acquisition, management and analysis in their report. They identified a lack of coordination among the various data systems and the lack of an articulated purpose or need. The ISRP called for a review of the major data structures including the coded wire tag and PIT tag operations, the Smolt Monitoring Program and one of the major users of data, the PATH process. The ISRP felt the review might identify efficiencies which could free-up resources and force discipline on regional monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The problems identified by the ISRP are due in part to the development of information services in response to diverse programmatic stimuli (FWP and ESA) and technological innovation (e.g. "flat" static text reports versus interactive forms-based queries). Such perceptions have complicated cooperative development of regional information infrastructure, access, and adaptive management. This is due in large part to the evolution of data management during the past years with the advent of Internet access.

- **Comment - Data Management and Analysis**

While many of the issues identified by the ISRP are presently addressed separately in the Council's Program, a cohesive data management structure is the logical next step in addressing the ISRP concerns. We recommend the Council, BPA and others develop a regionally agreed upon data setting to foster adaptive management. This structure should allow for open access to data in the same time and quality to all that desire its use for scientific analysis.

17. Issue and Comment - PATH Proposals

The ISRP comments were helpful in identifying some general problems with the presentation of the PATH proposals. To address these comments BPA will work to ensure that the FY 1999 contracts and future proposals have a more standardized background section. In addition, there will be additional information provided on related work and tasks across all PATH contracts in a more consistent format. Contracts that are considered to be non-discretionary will provide additional information and background regarding the necessity for this designation. We agree that the PATH contract proposals identified as inadequate will require additional information and work in the final development of FY 1999 contracts. While the proposals were inadequate in presentation, the work that has been performed under these ongoing contracts has been highly professional and critical to the PATH objectives. Without these contracts we would be unable to implement a PATH process, and other PATH related contracts would be of little value or application. Based on the ISRP comments, BPA will work towards more explicit coordination and consistency in all future PATH contracts and proposals.

In regards to the recommendation to identify PATH work on more of a long term funding arrangement, we believe that more short term annual reviews of PATH related work are in the best interests of achieving PATH objectives. The PATH funded work is in compliance with the 1995 ESA Biological Opinion (BO) on Columbia River Hydro Operations. The annual review of ESA requirements, new information, and compliance with the BO requires annual review of PATH related work and level of funding.